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SUBJECT: RUSSO-JAPANESE RELATIONS: POST-SUMMIT PROGRESS

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11. (C) Summary: Prime Minister Koizumi plans to raise the Northern Territories territorial dispute during his meeting with President Putin on the margins of the upcoming G-8 Summit, according to the Japanese Foreign Ministry. Progress has been made in five of the 12 bilateral agreements signed at the November 2005 Japan-Russia Summit, according to MOFA Russia Division officials. The two countries are moving forward in disaster prevention cooperation, drafting a Multilateral Legal Assistance Treaty, accelerating visa issuance, counterterrorism cooperation and the Pacific oil pipeline project. End Summary.

#### Progress on Bilateral Agreements

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12. (C) Progress has been made on five of the 12 bilateral agreements stemming from Russian President Vladimir Putin's November 2005 visit to Tokyo, MOFA Russia Division Principal Deputy Director Kazuhiko Nakamura told Embassy Tokyo Political Officer recently. Advancing cooperation on disaster prevention is a top priority, Nakamura explained, because both countries, located on the edge of the same tectonic plate along the "Ring of Fire," are prone to devastating earthquakes. During bilateral meetings on disaster prevention in February 2006, Russian Minister for Civil Defense Sergey Kuzhugetovich Shoygu brought several proposals to the table, Nakamura stated, which Japan is now reviewing with the intent of holding expert-level meetings soon.

13. (C) Preliminary consultations on a Multilateral Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) were held in March 2006, and the MLAT committee hopes to begin formal negotiations this summer for an MLAT comparable to the recently signed U.S.-Japan MLAT, Nakamura reported. Consultations began in March 2006 to draft an agreement that would accelerate Japanese visa issuance to a broad range of Russian visa categories, including journalists and students. However, Nakamura admitted, negotiations to convince Russia to issue multiple-year visas have stalled because Russia claims to "need an international agreement" in order to relax its visa rules.

14. (C) Seeking progress on a counterterrorism bilateral agreement, Japan Coast Guard Commandant Hiroki Ishikawa traveled to Vladivostok at the beginning of May to conduct a joint antiterrorism drill with the Russian Border Guard Service, Nakamura noted. Ishigawa observed the exercise with his counterpart, Vladimir Pronichev. The exercise scenario

assumed that a terrorist group had hijacked a boat and taken hostages. During the visit, the two sides concluded an agreement to enhance cooperation in the areas of weapons and drug trafficking, as well as to increase efforts to counter poaching.

#### Japan More Flexible on Pipeline?

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15. (C) Consultations on the Pacific oil pipeline have been ongoing since the Summit, noted Nakamura, who explained that energy security remains a top Japanese priority. While Russia continues to be noncommittal about whether the second stage of the Pacific pipeline that starts in Taishet will continue on to the Pacific or branch south to China, Japan "has no problem" with the ambiguity so long as Russia "does not completely abandon the route to the Pacific," Nakamura stated. Environmental assessments continue to delay the pipeline, Nakamura reported, pointing to new environmental concerns regarding Perevoznaya as the terminal port on the Pacific. If the final environmental assessment deems it necessary, the strategy is to either retain Perevoznaya as the terminal port and alter other parts of the plan or change the terminal port to Nakhodka. Nakamura hopes the upcoming G-8 Summit will lead to further agreement on the pipeline issue.

#### Putin-Koizumi Meeting on Margins of G-8

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16. (C) Nakamura confirmed that President Putin and Prime Minister Koizumi are scheduled to meet on the margins of the July G-8 Summit in St. Petersburg. Asked whether Koizumi would raise the Northern Territories territorial dispute, Nakamura answered that "he will surely bring it up." Nakamura confided that Japan is hoping to use the summit to create a better environment to advance territorial negotiations. He characterized the mood at the Putin-Koizumi 2005 Summit as "difficult," pointing to the fact that it was the 50th anniversary of Russia's victory in World War II. Consequently, Russian domestic opinion tended to be more nationalistic, which prevented Putin from negotiating the issue. Nakamura was optimistic that the mood of the upcoming meeting would improve because Putin is starting to "calm down" from last year and, as host of the G-8 Summit, he will be "forced to tone down his rhetoric."

17. (C) Comment. Nakamura's expressions of flexibility on sequencing the phases of pipeline construction represent a more lenient Japanese approach. Earlier reports stated that Japan threatened to pull investment from the pipeline project if Russia decided to build the pipeline to China first.

SCHIEFFER